



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

# NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

4300 Cherry Creek Dr. S.  
Denver, CO 80246

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 25, 2012

**CONTACT:**

Mark Salley  
Communications Director  
303-692-2013  
[mark.salley@state.co.us](mailto:mark.salley@state.co.us)

## **It's time to get your annual flu vaccination**

### ***Ask about protecting your family from pertussis (whooping cough) too***

DENVER – Dr. Rachel Herlihy, director of the immunization program at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, is urging Coloradans to get their annual flu vaccination. To get immunized for flu, contact your health care provider or visit <http://flushot.healthmap.org> to find a vaccination clinic near you. Many grocery stores and pharmacies also offer these vaccinations, as well as some employers.

Dr. Herlihy said, “When getting your flu vaccine, it’s an excellent time to ask your health provider whether you also should be immunized for pertussis, also called whooping cough. Colorado has seen an epidemic number of whooping cough cases reported, 849 since January.

“We are encouraging adults to ask their doctor about a Tdap vaccination for themselves and to make sure their children are up to date with their vaccinations. It’s especially important for families with very young children, who are more vulnerable to whooping cough. Child care workers also should make sure they are up to date on their whooping cough vaccinations,” she added

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone six months of age and older get the seasonal flu vaccination. The vaccine is available as a shot or a nasal spray. Flu can strike anytime but is most likely to infect people between October and May.

This year’s flu vaccination protects against three strains of influenza: the same strain of 2009 H1N1 that was in last year’s vaccine and two new strains: an H3N2 virus and a B virus. The vaccination is the best way to protect you and your loved ones from flu.

While flu often is treated successfully at home, it is a serious respiratory illness that can result in hospitalization and even death. It is difficult to predict how many persons may become ill from flu during the upcoming flu season, as the timing, severity, and length of the season depends on many

factors. During the past three flu seasons in Colorado, flu contributed to an average of 1200 Colorado residents being hospitalized each season. No pediatric deaths due to flu were reported in Colorado residents during the 2011-2012 flu season, but three pediatric flu deaths were reported during the 2010-2011 season and 12 pediatric flu deaths were reported during the 2009-2010 season. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children; pregnant women; people with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease; and people 65 years and older.

This year, a new state rule aimed at protecting patients from influenza requires licensed health care facilities to report vaccination rates of their employees. Health care workers can unintentionally pass the flu virus to their patients. The rule requires facilities to reach a threshold of 60 percent of employees vaccinated this year, 75 percent next year, and 90 percent thereafter.

For more information on flu, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.